



AQUACULTURE DIVISION

FARM-RAISED SHELLFISH TAGGING FACT SHEET

- The tagging program assures that the State of Maryland is in compliance with the federal requirements of the Food and Drug Administration's National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP) by providing identification and traceability of shellfish harvested from shellfish aquaculture leases and the public fishery.
- Tagging regulations require anyone harvesting shellfish from a lease to complete and affix a Farm-Raised Shellfish tag to **each** container of shellfish, or shellfish stored in bulk before leaving the leased area from which the shellfish were harvested. The regulations can be found in the Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 08.02.23.04(I).
- In 2014, the Department adopted regulations to allow harvesters that are also certified by the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene to utilize a dealer tag, that meets the requirements stipulated in the National Shellfish Sanitation Program Model Ordinance, in lieu of a Department-issued harvester tag. The specifications for using a dealer tag in lieu of a harvester tag can be found in COMAR 08.02.23.04(I).
- Shellfish tagging is the industry standard nationwide. Bringing our State into compliance with the tagging program will build consumer confidence that Maryland shellfish are safe, certified and healthy.
- Tags must remain affixed to the container until the product is in the possession of Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) certified shellfish dealer.
- Farm-Raised Shellfish tags are issued to leaseholders by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources and may not be transferred or reused. Prior to any harvest activity in 2016, leaseholders needing new tags should obtain them beginning January 1, 2016 and begin using them immediately upon receipt of the tags.
- **You may not be in possession of wild shellfish tags and farm-raised shellfish tags on your harvesting vessel at the same time.**
- Failure to comply with the State's tagging requirements can result in civil and/or criminal penalties, including the suspension or revocation of a leaseholder's SAHP or Registrant cards associated with the lease.